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SUBJECT: GERMAN VIEWS ON OCTOBER 26-27 GAERC

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Classified By: Political M/C George Glass for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) Summary. Germany is in broad agreement with U.S. points on Afghanistan/Pakistan, but officials expect no discussion on the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Pakistan during the October GAERC. Afghanistan discussions will center around adopting the Council's Action Plan, which, Germany believes, could enter an implementation phase no later than March. Bosnia will dominate Balkans discussions as officials try to digest the results of this week's negotiations with Bosnian leaders in Butmir. Given the current state of play, Germany expects the GAERC to reach no decision on closing the OHR. On Middle East issues, the GAERC will, at best, hold internal talks on how to support U.S.-led efforts in the future. The EU3 will also likely give an update on the Geneva talks with Iran. End summary.

Balkans

12. (C) Poloff discussed ref email points with MFA Deputy European Correspondent Angela Ganniger on October 22. Ganniger said the Bosnia crisis will dominate discussions on the Western Balkans but that officials will likely reach no decision on the issue of closing the OHR. Instead, the goal will be to brief FMs on the second round of negotiations with Bosnian leaders in Butmir on October 20-21. The GAERC might discuss potential scenarios for the way forward, but no substantial decisions will be possible since officials must first assess the results of the Butmir talks. These results will, in turn, likely shape views regarding the push for OHR closure during the November Peace Implementation Council meeting.

13. (C) On the issue of visa liberalization for Western Balkan countries, Ganniger said Germany is open-minded as long as countries meet the criteria -- including confidence in the passport-issuing process. However, Germany will not support visa liberalization as a reward or as a tool to spur additional reforms. She noted that some countries want to use the issue to send a political signal in support of Balkan integration with Europe but that Germany sees this as strictly a security question and will oppose liberalization if countries do not meet the requirements.

Afghanistan/Pakistan

14. (C) Ganniger said the October GAERC will approve an Afghanistan/Pakistan action plan with goals and priorities aimed at spurring increased Afghan ownership in the conflict. The focus will not be on humanitarian issues but rather long-term stability and capacity-building efforts to ensure Afghan self-government. She emphasized that specific weight will be given to rule-of-law, border issues, and international cooperation. If all goes well, Germany expects to see an implementation program developed by March.

15. (C) On EUPOL staffing, Ganniger believed the GAERC might make a general call for contributions from members; however, she does not expect countries to come forward with any commitments during the meeting. For now, the discussion on reaching the 400-man target is being conducted at the working level -- including discussions on a recruitment strategy.

16. (C) According to Ganniger, the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Pakistan will not come up during the GAERC. For its part, Germany has not reached internal agreement on whether to contribute. In general, Ganniger said, the MFA has a positive view of this initiative, however, there has been no decision yet and the final call will fall to Germany's aid agency, BMZ.

Middle East Peace

17. (C) The GAERC goal is to do nothing to undermine USG efforts in the Middle East. Ganniger said the EU is waiting to get cues from the U.S. and will hold only internal discussions on how to support our efforts. Ganniger said there is no GAERC effort to develop alternatives to U.S.-led engagement and she expects no specific statements in the Council conclusions.

General

18. (C) Overall, Ganniger said the October GAERC will focus on climate change, the economic/financial crisis, and internal

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issues -- in advance of the quarterly European Council meeting that same week. The GAERC will also discuss Moldova, where Poland and Romania have worries about the financial crisis. The focus will be on ways that the EC can develop a macro-economic assistance plan that dovetails with IMF efforts. However, Ganniger said, it is unlikely that any decision will be reached.
Delawie